

**MEDITATIONS FOR
MONTHLY RETREATS FOR
THE USE OF RELIGIOUS**

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Meditations for monthly retreats for the use of religious by H. C. Sample

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H. C. SAMPLE

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“Come to Me, all you that labor and are burdened, and I will refresh you.” (St. Matt. xi. 28).

MEDITATIONS FOR MONTHLY
RETREATS

FOR THE USE OF RELIGIOUS

WITH PREFACE

BY

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✚ JOHN M. FARLEY,
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PREFACE.

AFTER the mission is over and the parish has come back to every-day piety, there are always some good souls in trouble of conscience, and the pastor or ordinary confessor is slow to place the blame of the trouble on the preaching of the missionary. For has he not weekly experience of some of his flock taking in a wrong sense his own matter-of-fact Sunday announcements, which he has dinned into their ears in plain words and strong tones? And how can he now be surprised that doctrines of theology or spirituality have not been caught right by all, or that burning words of censure, which had to be spoken for the lax sinner, have been taken especially for themselves by the saints of over delicate conscience?

However, as he sits down to his post-mission task in the confessional, with these best friends of God kneeling at his feet and

putting their souls in his hands, although deeply moved with tender sympathy for their anguish of heart, he is perhaps amused at the sameness of the stumbling blocks which the missions always raise in the way of persons, who are intelligent in all matters that do not touch their souls closely, but who are, on these points, over literal in mind and over timid in conscience. And perhaps he uses the privilege of long mutual confidence to make them laugh at their own follies.

They fear that they have left out some mortal sin from their general confession, whereas the old friend who knows them well assures them that they had no mortal sin to confess, and, even if they had, they forgot that the rule for completeness of confession was made by the good Jesus, Who died that they might be easily forgiven, and that His rule is that after one serious trial to tell all mortal sins, no one is bound to try again. They fear that some things are now certain which were told as doubtful, and the answer is that even though they are now certain—which the confessor denies—the sincere telling them as doubtful was enough. They

fear that they may have consented fully to some grievous temptation without being fully conscious of such consent, and they are told in the language of the old ascetic that this is as absurd as to suppose a roaring lion could be in a well kept room without being noticed there. They fear that the fact that they have the same kind and number of venial sins to tell every week is an evident sign that they lack a serious purpose of amendment, and the confessor takes this fact as evidence that they have a most serious purpose of avoiding sins of worse kinds and of checking the number of these venial faults, if they are really sins at all and not, most of them, mere temptations.

They dread lest their communions may be sacrilegious on account of some mortal sin they are not conscious of, and they are told that even if this absurd supposition were granted true, and that they had in their soul some huge monster which they could not see, yet if they have only ordinary attrition, not only is their communion not bad but is believed by theologians to be good and useful; for in this case, the Body and Blood of Our

Lord, although a sacrament of the living which ordinarily supposes the life of habitual grace, would Itself destroy the death of mortal sin in the soul and produce the life of grace. Here Our Lord would be truly the Lamb of God Who taketh away sin, the Lord saying the word and making us worthy for Him to enter under our roof, the good Rabboni whose pure feet cleansed the impure lips and soul of Magdalen through the kiss of love. At least, they fear that they are not good enough to receive communion so frequently, and they must be reminded that Pius X. has settled this question for all time, and told us that all may go to communion every day, if only they are free from mortal sin and have an upright intention.

Again, they fear that they are making no progress and had better give up trying, because year in and year out they have the same defects which they have not conquered. But, granting that they have the same defects, they must not forget that goodness is not only negative, but also positive, that it is not only in avoiding bad acts but also in doing good acts; and that so long as we are in